

Risk Assessment Guidance

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St George's Primary Wrotham Kent



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Risk Assessment (KELSI Guidance Document)

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Managers are required to manage health and safety in the workplace and plan it into their daily routines. This section covers the general principles of risk assessment. Employees and others who may be affected have a responsibility to take reasonable care of their own safety and that of other people and must therefore use equipment and apply safe ways of working in accordance with the instruction and training they have received.

Definitions

Risk assessment – an examination of the workplace and work activities to identify the measures that need to be taken to eliminate or minimise the risk of work-related injuries and ill-health.

Hazard – anything with the potential to cause harm.

Risk – the chance (high, medium or low) that somebody will be harmed by the hazard

Scope

In order to manage health and safety, employers are required to carry out risk assessments and record the significant findings. This involves identifying and assessing workplace hazards faced by employees, contractors, volunteers, visitors and members of the public and putting in place suitable arrangements to control these risks. Details of these arrangements and any training that is needed will need to be provided to all those who may be affected.

When considering what activities take place and who may be affected, managers need to consider:

- All routine and non-routine activities (e.g. maintenance operations, loading and unloading).
- All workplaces and groups of staff, including lone workers, cleaners, night staff, staff with disabilities, contractors, agency staff, visitors, pupils, volunteers, members of the public and services users. It may also include new and expectant mothers.

If KCC shares a workplace with another employer, managers must co-operate with them and co-ordinate the management of health and safety. Managers need to inform the other party of any risks to their health and safety arising from their work. This will enable both parties to meet their legal responsibilities.

The why, what and how

Managers need to make sure all activities are properly thought about and that everybody affected is clear about what is expected of them and how to do their job safely. This should avoid the misery of injury and protect staff from emergency situations, investigations or legal proceedings.

To be able to manage health and safety, managers need to ensure they are aware of any risks that are present and what can reasonably be done to control them.

These reasonable measures must be preventative and protective and include:

- Ensuring everybody is aware of the risks they face by carrying out risk assessments and providing all those affected with the latest detailed information as required.
- Eliminating or designing out hazardous activities where possible.
- Devising and providing details of safe systems of working and emergency procedures based upon the outcome of risk assessments.
- Ensuring everybody has the information and instructions they need and are adequately trained to carry out each specific task to the level required.
- Monitoring and maintaining the control systems that are in place.

This will involve monitoring and reviewing the systems to see if they are working and making any necessary changes where failings are identified, methods of working change or new risks arise.

Associated procedures and documentation

Listed below are related topics within KELSI. To read a topic, select the link.

Procedures

[Managing Health and Safety](#)

[Display Screen Equipment](#)

[Personal Protective Equipment](#)

[Manual Handling – \(Moving and Handling\) \(KELSI Guidance Document\)](#)

[Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare](#)

[Work Equipment \(KELSI Guidance Document\)](#)

[Young Persons](#)

[Control of Substances Hazardous to Health \(COSHH\)](#)

[New or Expectant Mothers](#)

[Fire Safety in the Workplace](#)

The documentation below refers to legislation and to Industry Standards. To read these in greater detail, select the website link and type in the name of the document you require.

Documentation

- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Fire Precautions Workplace Regulations 1997
- The Display Screen Equipment Regulations 1992 (Amended 2002)
- The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992
- The Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- First Aid at Work Regulations 1981
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health 2002

[Link to the HSE website](#)

[Link to the HMSO website](#)

[Link to the DCFS website](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment is a careful examination of the hazards in the workplace that could cause harm to people. Once managers have identified all the significant hazards, they will need to consider whether they have taken enough precautions or do they need to do more to prevent people from being harmed.

What's the difference between a hazard and a risk?

A hazard is anything with the potential to cause harm (e.g. electricity, working on ladders, chemicals etc.)

A risk is the chance – high, medium or low – that somebody will be harmed by the hazard (e.g. the likelihood of somebody falling off a ladder or suffering an electric shock). It is worth noting that the risk may vary depending on who could be affected.

When should I carry out a risk assessment?

Where no previous risk assessment has been undertaken for a task.

Complete your first or initial assessment of the total workplace. Keep a record of the main findings of the risk assessment and any training provided. You should update risk assessments when you feel they are no longer valid, i.e. the task has changed, new equipment is being used, the needs of the individual need to be considered further etc.

Some people are particularly vulnerable and need special consideration in your risk assessments, e.g. new or expectant mothers, young persons, or anyone with specific needs. This includes those with ill health or disabilities.

Who should carry out a risk assessment?

A risk assessment must be carried out by a competent person.

A person shall be regarded as competent when they have sufficient training and experience or knowledge of the workplace and other qualities to enable them to properly assist in undertaking the measures referred to, i.e. an ability to make sound judgement; and knowledge of the best practicable means to reduce those risks identified.

Competence may be defined as a combination of knowledge, skills, experience and personal qualities.

Being aware of the activities conducted within your department and managing them safely should already be part of your daily management practices. The risk assessment process outlined in this procedure is a formal record of how you successfully manage these risks on a regular basis. You should feel confident and aware of the activities you and your staff undertake before carrying out a risk assessment. If you feel you or your staff require further training or advice, please contact a Health and Safety Adviser, Learning and Development or your Directorate Training department.

How do I carry out a risk assessment – what do I need to do?

This link to the [flow chart](#) takes you through the stages of carrying out a risk assessment.

For blank risk assessment forms please go to [Appendix 1](#).

When identifying hazards and risks:

- Think about the activities being undertaken, the locations and the people carrying out the tasks.
- Identify the significant risks.
- Consider whether or not all legal requirements and industry standards are being met.
- Consider the types of equipment, the way they are used, who is using them and the work activities undertaken. NB: Actual practice may differ from what is written in the department manual. Shortcuts and incorrect ways of working can create risks that need to be noted and managed. Risk

assessments should always be carried out taking into account the experiences and opinions of those carrying out the task.

- Assess how the work is organised.
- Think about how the workplace and workstation is fitted and laid out.
- Consider the nature of any physical, biological or chemical agents staff may be exposed to, for how long and to what extent.
- Consider any restrictions on the work that can be undertaken (i.e. because of the physical capabilities or health of staff).
- Assess the extent of the health and safety training provided, or that needs to be provided, to the persons concerned.
- Discuss and identify individual/group needs and provide staff training on health and safety matters. Ensure the risks they face and all training provided is fully understood. Induction training should be conducted on the first day.
- Think about the need for supervision while at work, the level of supervision that will be provided and which competent persons will undertake the supervision.
- Keep a record of the main findings of the risk assessment and any training provided. Update the risk assessment when you feel it is no longer valid i.e. the task has changed, new equipment is being used, the needs of the individual have changed etc.
- Think about whether or not any health surveillance is required.

How many risk assessments must I undertake?

A risk assessment does not have to be duplicated in order to satisfy requirements under a different set of regulations. For example a risk assessment completed for a noise hazard does not have to be completed again if the noise hazard forms part of another assessment. Just reference and link the assessments.

Generic Assessments

You may produce a generic or 'model' risk assessment where similar activities are undertaken in similar places of work.

The generic assessment should be able to account for the majority of hazards and risks that arise, but you will need to add more detail to the generic assessment to cover the more specific or individual circumstances of the location or task.

Do I have to use the risk assessment forms in KELSI?

You do not need to use any of the forms if you feel more comfortable with creating your own form using the risk assessment process outlined in the FAQ “How do managers carry out a risk assessment – what do I need to do?”

How do I complete a risk assessment form?

The competent person in the department or operational section should complete the risk assessment form in Appendix 1 or create their own by following a risk assessment process they understand and are comfortable with.

When managers and staff have identified the significant hazards in the workplace, they will have to consider each one and decide whether the remaining risk level is high, medium or low.

1. To be able to calculate the risk level, both the hazard severity and the likelihood of it occurring need to be given a value.
2. The values for hazard severity and the likelihood of it occurring are usually shown as either high, medium or low or can be numerical - 1,2,3.
3. So where, for example, an occurrence is likely to happen it is given a high value and where the severity is considered minimal it is given a low value.
4. This allows you to decide the risk level by calculating the hazard severity and the likelihood of it occurring, shown as:

Hazard severity x Likelihood of occurrence = Risk level

Where a risk level is medium you may wish to involve a Health and Safety Adviser. When a risk level is high, it is strongly recommended that you do this.

Action Plans

Once managers and staff have identified a risk level they will need to create an action plan and give each risk an appropriate action level (e.g. deal with immediately or deal with within three months of the assessment).

An action plan will help you prioritise and plan the actions that you and all those affected should then carry out.

This action plan should ideally be prepared within seven days of completing the risk assessment and should be shared with other managers, members of staff and, through appropriate routes, with trade union representatives.

A blank risk assessment form can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

Are there different forms for different risks?

A risk assessment can be carried out in general or on a variety of topics (e.g. manual handling, display screen equipment, chemicals etc).

You will find generic forms in the Appendices to this procedure or by clicking on the topics within KELSI. Variations of the risk assessment form are available.

What information and training must managers provide?

Managers must make sure employees and others affected are aware of the risks they face in the workplace and about the control measures put in place to manage the risks.

Managers need to make sure they communicate in a way that ensures all employees understand what is required of them. This means thinking about staff in a minority group who may require an alternative format or more specific training to suit their individual needs.

Health and safety training must be provided to new employees as part of their induction. If the risks facing employees and associated parties change, managers must provide them with refresher training.

In addition to constantly providing them with the most up-to-date information, managers need to ensure they provide employees with the level of training necessary to enable them to work safely. This means that when allocating work to staff, managers must make sure that the demands of the task do not exceed their individual level of knowledge or their capability.

Managers are advised to keep records of what information and training has been provided and to whom.

Emergency Procedures

Managers need to think about emergencies such as fires and bomb alerts. Written guidance detailing how employees and others affected will stop work and get to a safe place will need to be in place.

Managers may require certain employees to carry out particular tasks in an emergency (e.g. fire wardens) and must therefore make sure employees are competent to do what is required of them.

Emergency co-ordinators must be made known to everyone.

What training is available for managers?

There are a number of health and safety training courses available through Learning and Development or within your Directorate/service unit.

Your induction to KCC includes an introduction to health and safety. After your induction, you should identify with your manager both the general and the more specific health and safety training you need to allow you to do your job.

Some of the general health and safety training available includes:

- Basic Health and Safety Awareness
- Display Screen Equipment
- Risk Assessment
- Manual Handling

Where can managers get health and safety help and advice?

Health and Safety Advisers are available to help you carry out your responsibilities. Help is also available from a number of individuals or departments e.g. Staff Care Services (Occupational Health), Facilities Management, Property Management and Trade Unions. The adviser will assist you and inform you if more specialist help is required.

How do managers know whether or not health surveillance is required?

Where significant hazards have been identified, managers should have assessed the risk to their employees and devised ways of reducing that risk. However, managers still need to check whether or not the measures they have taken are protecting employees as planned. Health surveillance will help do this and will alert the manager to any adverse effects on an employee's health.

Some examples of health surveillance include:

- Providing hearing tests for employees exposed to high noise levels.
- Providing lung function testing for employees exposed to breathable dust.
- Providing regular skin tests for employees exposed to skin sensitisers.

For more information on health surveillance contact a [Health and Safety Adviser](#) or Staff Care Services (Occupational Health).

Appendices

Blank risk assessment form – [Appendix 1](#)